

AN EARLIER NAME FOR *MELOSPIZA LINCOLNII STRIATA*.

The bird described by Mr. William Brewster (Auk, 1889, p. 89) as *Melospiza lincolnii striata* seems to be a recognizable race of *Melospiza lincolnii* from which it differs in smaller size and broader streaking of the upper parts. The original description was based on autumn specimens from Comox, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, but Mr. Joseph Grinnell has recently shown (Auk, 1904, pp. 274-276) that the summer home of the subspecies is the coast region of southeastern Alaska, particularly the vicinity of Sitka and Wrangel.

The name given to this form by Mr. Brewster (*loc. cit.*) is, however, long antedated by at least one other. In a pertinent connection Finsch (Abhandl. Nat. Ver. Bremen, III, 1872, p. 46) cites *Emberiza spinoletta* "Kittlitz" Brandt, Descr. et Icon. Anim. Ross., 1836, pl. II, fig. 7, as a synonym of the Alaskan *Melospiza lincolnii*. This plate seems, however, never legitimately to have been published, as Plate II of the work in question represents *Anser leucopareus* Brandt, and the name *spinoletta* is therefore unavailable for *Melospiza lincolnii striata*; but even had the name been properly published, it would be somewhat doubtfully applicable, since no locality is mentioned, though presumptively this is the neighborhood of Sitka, where Kittlitz is known to have collected.

No such uncertainty, however, attends the name *Emberiza (Zonotrichia) gracilis* Kittlitz (Denkwurd. Reise Russ. Amer. I, 1858, p. 199), based on two adults taken June 25 and an immature bird of July 15, at Sitka, Alaska, with the following diagnosis: "Die kline, schlanke Gestalt und der aschgraue mit mehreren schwarzen Linien bezeichnete Kopf charakterisirt dieselbe." This description, though brief, is sufficiently definite to identify *Melospiza lincolnii striata*, for neither of the only other small breeding sparrows of Sitka—*Melospiza cinerea rufina* and *Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus*—agrees in characters with the above description given by Kittlitz, while *M. l. striata* does. In *Melospiza c. rufina* the top and sides of the head, with the exception of a dull brownish slate superciliary stripe, are sooty brown, almost uniform, the slightly darker centers of the feathers being only faintly suggestive of streaking. In *Passerculus s. alaudinus*, the head, although much streaked with black, is yellowish or buffy white, not ash gray, as in *Melospiza lincolnii striata*. To be sure, Kittlitz makes no mention of the reddish brown margins of some of the black coronal streaks, but in so brief a description this is scarcely to be expected. In view of these facts it becomes necessary to change the name of *Melospiza lincolnii striata* Brewster to *Melospiza lincolnii gracilis* (Kittlitz).

—Harry C. Oberholser.

THE SPECIFIC NAME OF THE HAWK OWLS.

Linnaeus described the European hawk owl under two names in the first edition of his *Systema Naturae* (1758, I, p. 93)—as *Strix funerea* and *Strix ulula*. The former is based primarily on Fauna Suecica, No. 51, the latter on Fauna Suecica, No. 52. As has been stated by various authors, there is no doubt of the equal pertinency of these names, and although by

recent writers the latter has been used, *Strix funerea* stands first on the page, and as it thus has anteriority, should be adopted in place of *Strix ulula*. The names of the two forms of the species will by this procedure stand as:

Surnia funerea funerea (Linnaeus),

Surnia funerea caparoch (Müller).

—Harry C. Oberholser.

PIRANGA ERYTHROMELAS VERSUS PIRANGA MEXICANA.

The name *Piranga erythromelas* which has long been used for the scarlet tanager is much antedated by *Loxia mexicana* Linnaeus (Syst. Nat. ed. 10, I, 1758, p. 172), applied undoubtedly to the same bird. Linnaeus (*loc. cit.*) gives the following diagnosis and locality:

"L[oxia] rubra, alis nigris.

Habitat in America australi."

He gives also a reference to Seba, whose description, though not long, is accurate and perfectly applicable.

This description (Locuplet. rer. natural. thesauri accur. descript. et icon. artific. express., I, 1734, p. 101, t. 65, f. 1) is in full as follows:

"*Avis, mexicana, grandis, rubra; passeris species.*

"Quae caput, thoracem, & dorsum ejus vestiunt, pennae sanguinei sunt coloris; dum pennae remiges & cauda, prorsus nigricant, rubedine tamen aliquâ supernam partem obtegente."

Linnaeus in a later connection (Syst. Nat. ed. 12, I, 1766, p. 300) somewhat amplifies his first account by describing the bird as "L. rubra, alis caudaque nigris," and adding as a synonym the *Coccothraustes mexicana* of Brisson (Ornith. III, 1760, p. 256). Brisson also cites Seba, and furthermore gives a detailed description of his own that in all particulars of color and dimensions agrees almost exactly with the bird now called *Piranga erythromelas*, and with this alone. It might be mentioned that Salvin and Godman long ago announced (Biol. Cent.-Am. Aves, I, 1886, p. 424) this identification of Linnaeus' *Loxia mexicana*, but for reasons of their own continued to use the name then current for the species—*Pyrranga rubra*. There seems now, however, no reason for rejecting the exclusively pertinent name given by Linnaeus, even though on a subsequent page (Syst. Nat. ed. 10, I, 1758, p. 174) he uses the term *Loxia mexicana* for an entirely different species—undoubtedly *Spiza americana* (Gmelin)! Our present bird should therefore in future be called *Piranga mexicana* (Linnaeus).

—Harry C. Oberholser.

THE NAMES OF THE PASSENGER PIGEON AND THE MOURNING DOVE.

To those naturalists who, like the British, use the twelfth edition of Linnaeus (1766) as the starting point of binomial nomenclature, the names of the Passenger Pigeon and the Mourning Dove are clear and offer no complications. Not so, however, to the Americans and others who start